

Northeast Sands

Significance of the Properties within the Landscape

The properties to be planned within the Northeast Sands (NES) are major contributors to the ecological and recreational significance of the landscape.

Collectively, the properties present opportunities to protect, manage, and restore all the major ecological features of the NES: extensive forests, high-biodiversity-value forest communities; barrens and bracken grasslands; river/stream corridors and other aquatic and wetland habitats; and bedrock features. The Pine-Popple and Pike Wild Rivers, three of only five state-designated Wild Rivers in Wisconsin, feature densely forested corridors with diverse forest communities and significant tracts of older forest, including hemlock-hardwoods, drier pine-oak-aspen, lowland hardwoods, and conifer swamps. Spread Eagle Barrens and Dunbar Barrens offer opportunity to manage for globally imperiled pine barrens and Spread Eagle is the best place in the state for bracken grasslands. The Wildlife and Fishery Areas contain extensive forests of aspen, oak, and pine, and wetland complexes of conifer and hardwood swamps, shrub wetlands, and sedge meadow. Three of the Wildlife Areas contain an embedded State Natural Area.

Similarly, the properties contain regionally significant recreational resources. All the major properties offer opportunity for hunting and trapping. Extensive tracts of forests and wetlands support populations of game species such as deer, bear, ruffed grouse, woodcock, waterfowl, and furbearers such as beaver and otter. The Pine-Popple and Pike rivers feature outstanding paddling and fishing, as well as scenic enjoyment of their many rapids, waterfalls, and bedrock outcrops. Various coldwater streams on the properties are excellent for trout fishing. The properties also offer opportunity for hiking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, wildlife viewing, and gathering of wild edibles.

Several properties have potential to meet recreational shortages and high-ranked recreation needs as identified in the Recreation Opportunities Analysis (ROA), including non-motorized trail activities, primitive camping, and additional public access to lakes and rivers for fishing and boating.

